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Editorial.

THE BULLETIN OF PHARMACY.

With this number of the BULLETIN we shall call it by a new name. It has been formally christened this time, and hopes to retain its present name as long as it exists. While its name has been changed, its nature will not be, except so far as it is possible for further knowledge and effort to improve it.

The BULLETIN OF PHARMACY will continue to keep the pharmacist informed of progress in the art as it is recorded in this country and foreign centres. It is desired to interest in it all those practicing pharmacy, and to this end contributions are solicited of pharmaceutical articles, queries, and notes and news concerning anything of general or local interest which will profit this craft whose opinions we wish to reflect, and thus make the BULLETIN as it aspires to be, a mirror of current work and news of this rapidly developing art.

"MISPLACED CONFIDENCE."

It is somewhat of an anomaly, to say the least, to find the organ of a personage admittedly verdant as regards both the practical and technical details of pharmacy, posing as the expounder of the Pharmacopœia, and conservator of the ethics and morals of pharmaceutical science.

Whether "for revenue only," to gratify some personal envy, pique, or in the interest of sensationalism, we are at loss to discover, yet the fact remains that the *Western Druggist*, from the very outset of the agitation that aims to establish pharmacy as a progressive science, has persistently and aggressively opposed any and all such measures—measures that are intended solely to benefit therapeutics by taking certain classes and types of drugs from the realm of doubt and uncertainty, and placing in that of definiteness and surety. Thus our chlorotic contemporary never fails to discover an artfully concealed "African" that is intended to cater to any number of giant ogres ("schemes") which are constantly on the alert "seeking whom they may devour." This appears to have developed a form of mania difficult to define. Hack Tuke says a "sense of impending danger" betokens acute dementia, and "hallucinations of self-grandeur" are evidences of threatening chronic imbecility, yet in this instance we are inclined to believe the malady is rather of a hydrocephalic nature, judging from the evidence embodied in the following editorial:

A STANDARDIZING SCHEME.

While the work of the revision of the U. S. Pharmacopœia is enlisting the aid of many pharmacists, chemists, and physicians, throughout the country, there are others who attempt to belittle the work, to misrepresent its aims, and in some instances to give gratuitous advice. Recently, two pharmacists of New Jersey were prosecuted for selling tincture of nux vomica which did not contain two per cent of extract. The defense was, that the tincture was not made by them according to the U. S. P., but from a "standardized" liquid preparation of a certain manufacturer, and the claim was made that, while it was deficient in percentage of extract, it was of full alkaloidal strength. A great noise is made in consequence over the "errors of the U. S. P., in 1880," and that great contributor to the Pharmacopœia, the *Druggist's Circular*, warningly exclaims, Gentlemen of the Committee, revise your Pharmacopœia every five years, and be sure you get it right.

The U. S. Pharmacopœia, 1880, does not require tincture of nux vomica to contain two per cent of extract. In the official directions for preparing the tincture, the percentage of extractive is determined and adjusted so that the finished tincture shall con-

the Committees have adopted or devised a number of terms under which certain substances can be made official. The protected titles are not even included among the synonyms, but in each case a foot-note is appended. In this way we learn that acetanilid is commonly known as "antifebrin," and that adeps lanæ hydrosus, glusid, and phenazon, are respectively known as "lanolin," "saccharin," and "antipyrin." In a similar way we are told that effervescent tartarated soda powders are commonly known as Seidletz powders, and solution of potassio-cupric tartrate is only another name for the familiar Fehling's solution. The precise legal value of these foot-notes we have yet to learn.

It is not necessary to say much about the individual monographs as they appear in the Addendum. On page 7 allusion is made to the valuable assistance rendered in the preparation of this work from a Committee of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. This Committee certainly contained a number of well known names, but there are no very striking evidences of its work. Many of the formulæ have been taken *en masse* from the Unofficial Formulary, and although in one instance (tr. strophanthi) a modification was made, the alteration scarcely seems to be an improvement.

The definitions, characters, and tests, also present nothing novel; as already pointed out by other critics in this country, some are taken almost unaltered from the new German Pharmacopœia, and others closely resemble those suggested in "Helbing's Pharmacological Record" so that the work done by the Committee of the Pharmaceutical Society is not very conspicuous. Possibly they exhausted all their energies upon the mental labor of coining the names glusid, phenazon, etc.!

Christmas is always expected to bring an influx of custom to all classes of business, including that of the pharmacist, and almost everywhere special novelties for the season are procured by the enterprising chemist and druggist to tempt his customers. Dressing the window with a ground-work of gossypium, and a good show of elegant toilet requisites and perfumery, is another solemn ceremony which is just now being observed, with which we may well leave, for the present, with all good wishes, the British pharmacist and his concerns.

PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS FROM GERMANY.

Looking Backward.

In this age we live at a very high pressure, or, in other words, we live fast; it is scarcely possible to form an accurate judgment of the progress which is made, or how far we have come by virtue of the recent investigations. It is, therefore, desirable that at the end of the year we should look back and note the salient features in the incidents of the twelve months. Of course, it is

impossible to take note of every little addition to our knowledge of pharmacology, chemistry, pharmacy, and so on, which is made during such a stretch of time, and this is why we speak of salient features.

During 1890 there has been a fair number of synthetic remedies either produced or introduced into medicine. From the laboratory of the chemist we have received a few antiseptics, most of which, however, are protected by patent right, and therefore belong rather to the domain of commerce than of science. The unceasing efforts of chemists to produce an ideal antipyretic have resulted in the turning out of acetylenephénylhydrazin, ethylenephénylhydrazinsuccinic acid, and various other compounds. The class of hypnotics has been enriched by the discovery of trional and tetronal, related to sulphonal, but containing more ethyl groups, and of sulphaldehyd of similar constitution to paraldehyd, and believed to be physiologically more active than the latter.

Then, among other remedies which have more or less firmly established themselves, are diuretin and orexin. On the whole, however, it must be borne in mind that the destiny of any new therapeutical agent can scarcely be foretold within twelve months of its introduction.

Among these therapeutical novelties a place must be given to spermin, which created quite a boom during the latter half of the year. The hypodermatic administration of the spermatic secretion of animals was first introduced by Brown-Sequard, and announcement of the wonderful stimulating effects of the injection excited considerable discussion. The subject was again under consideration at the International Medical Congress, where reference was made to spermin under which name a supposed purified product was known. Following on that came the synthetical base piperazidin, which in the free state seems to have a marked power of dissolving uric acid. We still await, however, the results of the physiological and therapeutical study of piperazidin or double ethylenimin, which was believed to be the essential stimulating agent of the Brown-Sequard emulsion.

The meeting of the International Medical Congress in Berlin must, of course, take a prominent place in the history of the year, from our point of view. There has scarcely been time yet to collect together and arrange in concrete form the great quantity of material which was, so to speak, shot there during the first part of August, but we may be sure that when this is done the result will be a solid and enduring structure—a structure which will owe something to the work and skill of American scientists, and indirectly to American enterprise.

One of the incidents of the Congress which will probably make it ever famous among its predecessors and followers was, the announcement by Robt. Koch of the discovery of a cure for tuberculosis. Such discoveries as this, are not made suddenly and in an isolated

manner; many years of patient investigation and unwearying study lead up to them, and therefore they are the more valuable and enduring. As in many other instances, we are at present too near to the discovery to be able to correctly estimate its importance, but this much seems undoubted, viz: That the fluid hypodermatically injected is of great diagnostic value, as only tuberculous patients exhibit the symptoms of reaction to it.

The year 1890 has been signalized by the preparation and publication in several European countries of new editions of the Pharmacopœias, and the issuing of the new Arzneibuch for the German Empire must be chronicled as one of the most important events. Detailed particulars were given in the letter of July last, as to the precise nature of the changes which had been made. A significant indication of the tendency of modern medicine, is afforded by the fact that seven extracts of the old edition were rejected, and four new fluid extracts admitted. The value of this class of galenicals is becoming widely recognized; their uniform strength, the completeness with which they are applicable as equivalents of the drugs, and their elegance, everywhere tend to increase the appreciation in which fluid extracts are held.

A very large number of crude drugs have been investigated in this country during the year, of which it would be impossible to give a complete list. It must, however, be premised, that for many of the drugs we are indebted, so to speak, to the long arms of American commerce as represented by such houses as Parke, Davis & Co., which, reaching to the remotest corners of the earth, bring crude drugs from their obscure habitats into the bright light of modern investigation.

Lobelia was long believed to yield an alkaloid which contained no oxygen, like coniine, nicotine, sparteine, and other liquid alkaloids. It has recently been shown, however, that this is not the case. Seibert obtained an alkaloid both from the herb and from the seed, as a pale yellow syrupy liquid with the formula $C_{18}H_{23}NO_3$.

Pomeranz has examined oil of sassafras, and found in it a phenol which turns out to be eugenol; it will be remembered that this compound surpasses carbolic acid in germicidal power.

More than one writer has commented upon the apparent decrease, in the last twenty years, in the amount of resin contained in jalap, and the suggestion was made that this was due to partial extraction at the districts of production. Suess recommends that the requirements of the Pharmacopœia should be lowered to at most 8 per cent. of resin in the tubers, and the new Pharm. Germ., ed. iii., has placed the minimum at 7 per cent. Bellingrodt, on the other hand, believes that the average yield of resin has been, since 1860, as much as 11.6 per cent.

Scopola atropoides has been examined by Ernst Schmidt, who found in it hyoscyamine and hyoscine, as well as a new alkaloid to which he assigns the formula $C_{17}H_{21}NO_4$. Altogether a fair amount of work has been done upon the Solanaceæ. An exhaustive analysis has been made of *Duboisia myoporoides*, from which hyoscyamine and hyoscine have been extracted, as well as the new alkaloid found in scopola by Schmidt. Dr. O. Hesse has examined *Atropa belladonna*, and isolated a new alkaloid, which he calls atropamine.

Much attention has also been given to cocaine, and to the by-products in its synthetical production. One of these latter, methyl-cocain, has been studied by Liebermann and Giesel, who find that it produces the same effects as cocaine. This is also true of dextro-cocain prepared synthetically from ecgonin by first acting upon it with potash. Prof. Ladenburg, Buchka, Emhorn, and others, have succeeded, by a variety of experiments, in establishing a close relationship between cocaine and atropine. Drs. Ehrlich and Poulsson have investigated the physiological action of the cocain group, and found that all the members produce marked pathological changes in the tissues of the liver.

The flowers of pyrethrum have again attracted the usual measure of attention. They have been separately examined by Dr. Hirschson and by Schlagdenhauffen and Reeb. These authors agree in the statement that the active principle of the powdered flowers is not a volatile body, and that while extracted by alcohol, ether and chloroform, it is not taken up by water. Hirschson further says, however, that it is not an acid body; but the other two workers conclude that it has acid properties.

It is only possible to mention the work of Hesse on quinine, cinchonidine, and their isomers, the examination of Java pomegranate, bark of white hellebore, of black bryony, of myrrh, of stramonium, and many other drugs. Among the newer articles of vegetable materia medica which have been examined, urechites ought to be mentioned. The result of Roberts' study of this drug has already been given. The same pharmacologist has published exhaustive treatises on ergot, and on the action of the various bitters, cetrarin, bryonin, quassin, bryonidin, etc.

It is scarcely necessary to say that a great part of the year's work remains, of course, still unfinished and unpublished, and it is never possible to do more in such a retrospect than point out a research here and an incident there, which seemed, at the moment, to stand out most prominently among the figures, already becoming indistinct, of the past. As already mentioned, this is an age when men are more inclined to rush forward than to pay much attention to the past, and beyond doubt in doing so we draw after us most of what was solid and enduring in the work of yesterday.